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54 **Treatment of infertility.**

57 The use of somatotrophin releasing factor (GRF) is disclosed for the treatment of infertility. Also disclosed for such treatment is the use of somatotrophin releasing factor along with gonadotrophins, particularly, follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) or preparations containing FSH. Pharmaceutical preparations containing somatotrophin releasing factor, including preparations containing both somatotrophin releasing factor and follicle stimulating hormone, are also disclosed.

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TREATMENT OF INFERTILITY

Summary of the invention

The invention refers to the new use of GRF (Somatotrophin releasing factor), alone or in combination with the follicle-stimulating hormone, in the treatment of infertility.

The present invention relates to the treatment of male and female infertility using a Somatotrophin releasing factor, alone or in combination with the follicle-stimulating hormone, or to the relevant pharmaceutical preparations.

The efficacy of the Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) in the induction of Progesterone synthesis by ovarian granulosa cells is well known. The acquisition of the capacity to synthesize progesterone by such cells, in turn, determines the completion of the maturation of the oocyte, for correct follicle growth and the normal functioning of corpus luteum.

Therapy with FSH and Chorionic Gonadotrophin has become the main treatment of anovulatory sterility due to insufficient endogenous secretion of gonadotrophins. FSH can be administered as Menotrophin or HMG (Human Menopausal Gonadotrophin), a preparation containing the same number of units of biological activity (I.U.) of the hormones FSH and LH (= Luteinizing Hormone), or as Urofollitrophin, a preparation containing FSH and insignificant quantities of LH.

The applicant markets such preparations under the names Pergonal^(R) and Metrodin^(R), respectively. Due to the demonstrated efficacy of gonadotrophins on the Sertoli cells, that is, the male equivalent of the ovarian granulosa cells, the same preparations are also used for the treatment of male infertility.

As stated above, while treatment with gonadotrophins has become the treatment of choice in female and male infertility, there are some clinical conditions in which this kind of treatment is not efficacious.

Studies carried out in normal subjects during the menstrual cycle have demonstrated that the intravenous administration of GRF produces an increase in serum levels of HGH and Sm-C but not of prolactin, LH or FSH (Evans W.S., et al. - Effects of human pancreatic growth-hormone-releasing factor-40 on serum growth hormone, prolactin, luteinizing hormone, follicle-stimulating hormone and somatomedin-C concentrations in normal women throughout the menstrual cycle. *J. Clin. Endoc. Metab.* 59: 1006, 1984).

It has also been demonstrated that Sm-C in nanomolar concentrations enhances FSH capacity in inducing synthesis of progesterone by cultured rat granulosa cells (Adashi E.Y., and others - Somatomedin-C synergizes with follicle-stimulating hormone in the acquisition of progestin biosynthetic capacity by cultured rat granulosa cells. *Endocrinology* 116:2135, 1985).

Not all the growth factors carry out the same kind of action.

It is known, for example, that EGF (= Epidermal Growth Factor) has an inhibitory effect on FSH-induced cyclic AMP production, and therefore on ovarian granulosa cells differentiation. Another growth factor, TGF-beta (= Transforming Growth Factor-beta) modulates the effect of FSH and EGF during the differentiation process of the same cells (Pei Feng, and others - Transforming Growth Factor beta regulates the Inhibitory Actions of Epidermal Growth Factor during Granulosa Cell Differentiation - *J. Biol. Chem.* 261(30), 14167, 1986).

In conclusion, it is evident that growth factors have a regulatory effect on the above mentioned processes of cell differentiation and interact with FSH at the cell target level of this gonadotrophin. Nevertheless, their mechanism of action and relative synergism have not yet been explained.

It has now been discovered that GRF is capable of interacting with the ovarian follicle-genesis and spermatogenesis regulatory mechanisms and with the maturation of spermatozoa.

It has also been discovered that GRF increases the in-vivo effect of gonadotrophins on the gonads.

Therefore, the main object of the present invention is the therapeutic use of GRF in treatment of cases of female and male infertility. A further object of this invention consists in a combined therapy of GRF and gonadotrophins, applicable whenever it is desirable or necessary to increase the effect of gonadotrophins on the gonads.

Other aims and advantages of the present invention will result from the following detailed description.

Abundant literature on GRF exists. (See, for example, Guillemin et al. *Science* 218, 585, 1982; Esch et al., *J. Biol. Chem.* 258,1806, 1983).

Various forms of GRF have been purified and their aminoacid sequence has been determined. GRF-44 contains the complete aminoacid sequence of GRF-40 and is extended at the carboxylic terminal by four aminoacids.

GRF-40, in turn, contains the complete aminoacid sequence of GRF-37 and is extended at the carboxylic terminal by three aminoacids

It has been shown that peptide GRF-29 is also biologically active (J. Rivier et al., *Nature*, 300, 276-8, 1982).

It has also been demonstrated that GRF-NH₂-44 is the mature hormone and that GRF 40, 37 and 29 are all biologically active fragments.

It has further been demonstrated that the various GRFS react both at the level of synthesis and at the level of release of the growth hormone by the hypophysis (Brazeau et al., *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci.* 79, 7909, 1982; Baringa

et al., Nature 306, 84, 1983).

GRF can be administered by the intravenous, intramuscular or subcutaneous routes. Other routes of administration, capable of providing the necessary haematic levels of GRF, are included in the present invention.

In the clinical trials reported below, GRF-29 was used in the form of lyophilized ampoules containing 100 or 150 micrograms (μg) of GRF and 10 milligrams (mg) of mannitol as excipient. The lyophilized substance, dissolved in 2 ml of physiologic saline, was administered by the intravenous route.

The pharmaceutical production of GRF ampoules was carried out by using traditional methods and does not present any particular difficulty.

IN-VITRO STUDIES

Studies have been carried out to determine immunoreactivity to GRF in human seminal and follicular fluids and in the supernatant of isolated Leydig rat cells; furthermore, binding sites for GRF have been identified in isolated Sertoli rat cells.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Follicular Fluid (F.F.)

Follicular fluid was obtained by means of aspiration of the follicles during the laparoscopy carried out under the GIFT or the FIVET programme. The follicular fluid was immediately centrifuged for 15 minutes at 2000 rpm to remove cells and cell fragments, and the supernatant was frozen at -20°C , until its extraction for the GRF dosage.

Seminal Fluid (S.F.)

Seminal fluid was collected from healthy volunteers, ranging in age from 24 to 36, by means of masturbation after 2-5 days of sexual abstinence. After collection, the seminal fluid was kept at room temperature for about 20 minutes until the coagulum liquified and then it was centrifuged for 15 minutes at 1500 rpm to remove spermatozoa and other cellular species. The supernatant was diluted 1:1 with 0.5 M acetic acid solution, boiled for 15 minutes and centrifuged for 10 minutes at 1000 rpm. The supernatants were frozen at -20°C .

Leydig Rat Cells Supernatants

Sprague Dawley adult rats aged 50 days were sacrificed, and their testicles removed, decapsulated and placed in a culture medium (Earle) containing 0.025% of collagenase. After 15-20 minutes of incubation at 34°C under stirring, the scattered cells were separated from the tubules, centrifuged and replaced in a culture medium containing 0.025% of collagenase. After three hours of incubation, the supernatant was separated and frozen at -20°C .

Extraction procedure

The samples prepared as described above were thawed and passed through octadecasilislice columns (Sep-Pak C18, Waters), activated with 90% methanol and 0.1% BSA; the material was eluted with 90% methanol in 1% HCOOH and subsequently dried under a nitrogen flow at room temperature. Recovery of labelled GRF as extracted by this method is 70%.

The dried residue is reconstituted in $\text{PBS} + 0.3\%$ BSA, 10 mM EDTA and dosed with the RIA method.

RIA Dosage of GRF

Label used: (3-[^{125}I]iodotyrosil 10) human GRF-44 (Amersham), specific activity about 2000 Ci/mmol. Anti-serum: anti-GRF obtained in the rabbit (Amersham) against human GRF-44. Cross-reactivity 100% with GRF-29.

Cold: human GRF-44 (Sigma).

Incubation volume: 24 h at 4°C .

Free separation from ligand: with carbon dextran.

Sensibility of the method: 7.8 pg/tube.

Intra- and inter-dosage variability: 5% and 10% respectively.

Preparation of Sertoli Cells and GRF Binding Conditions

Sertoli cells were isolated from the testicles of 14 day old rats, according to the techniques already described (A. Fabbri, et al. - Opiate receptors are present in the rat testis: Identification and localization on Sertoli cells. *Endocrinology* 117: 2544-2546, 1985). Briefly, the procedure consisted in the separation of the tubular compartment from the Leydig cells by means of enzymatic dispersion with collagenase and subsequent treatment of the tubules with trypsin and collagenase. The separated cells were applied to 48 well Costar plates at the concentration of approximately 100,000 cells per well. The cells were allowed to adhere to the bottom of the wells for 24 hours in a metabolic incubator at 34° C, in 95% O₂/5% CO₂. The cells were then washed and incubated in TC 199 10 mM TRIS medium in the presence of iodine labelled GRF-44 at the concentration of 10⁻¹¹M for 60 minutes at 4° C in the presence or absence of 10⁻⁶ M cold (unlabelled) human GRF-44. Then the cells were washed 3 times with PBS + 0.5% BSA at 4° C; the radio-activity bound to the cells was then solubilized with 0.1 N NaOH and read in a gammacounter.

2. RESULTS

Immunoreactivity to GRF

Immunoreactivity values for GRF in the examined biological fluids were the following:
 Follicular fluid = 60 pg/ml
 Seminal fluid = 140 pg/ml
 Leydig rat cell supernatant = 100 pg/ml.

Binding Sites on the Sertoli Cells

The results obtained showed the presence of specific binding of GRF to Sertoli cells equal to 2.5 fmoles of peptide/70 mcg of protein (about 40 fmoles/mg of protein).

3. CONCLUSIONS

These results indicate that:

1. immunoreactivity to GRF is present both in human follicular and seminal fluid;
2. immunoreactivity to GRF is present in the supernatant of Leydig rat cells and its binding sites are located on the Sertoli cells of the same animal species.

It can therefore be hypothesised that positive clinical effects on follicle-genesis and spermatogenesis could have been due to a direct action of the peptide at ovarian and testicular level, always considering the possibility of an effect mediated by other growth factors.

CLINICAL STUDIES

Treatment of female infertility.

In a clinical study carried out in conformity with the present invention women, both with normal follicle-genesis (as control) and follicle-genesis deficiency were treated.

The study consisted in echographic and hormonal monitoring of follicle-genesis during which the volume of the follicle in maturative growth and the plasma levels of 17-beta estradiol and 17-alpha OH progesterone were recorded.

In the controls with normal follicle-genesis, 2 monitorings of the follicle-genesis were carried out in accordance with the above mentioned procedures: the first verified the basal situation and the second was under administration of GRF-29 at the dosage of 100 or 150 mcg/day i.v. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle.

In patients with follicle-genesis deficiency, monitorings of the follicle-genesis were carried out: without any medicinal administration (as control); under administration of GRF-29 at the dosage of 100 or 150 mcg/day i.v. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle; under administration of FSH (METRODIN^(R)) at the dosage of 75 or 150 I.U./day i.m. for 7 days; under the combined administration of FSH + GRF at the above dosage.

Case 1 (C.R.)

Age 21 - Normal follicle-genesis - Control.

The first cycle of observation (basal) shows the presence of follicular activation and evidence of a dominant follicle between the 14th and the 15th day of the cycle, with ovulation between the 17th and the 18th day.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	58	748	10
2	absent	62	840	
3	5 mm	59	790	15
4	5 mm	64	864	
5	5 mm	71	854	
6	5 mm	69	843	20
7	5 mm	74	860	
8	5 mm	78	890	
9	6 mm	82	910	25
10	7 mm	84	896	
11	7 mm	86	930	
12	7 mm	88	915	30
13	10 mm right	94	913	
14	11 mm right	112	980	
15	15 mm right	127	1040	35
16	18 mm right	224	1470	
17	20 mm right	196	1560	
18	DEHISCENCE	136	1680	40

The second cycle of observation, carried out under therapy with GRF-29 (100 mcg/day i.v.), shows the presence of follicular activation and evidence of a dominant follicle between the 13th and the 14th day of the cycle, with ovulation between the 15th and 16th day.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	43	470	50
2	absent	63	440	
3	absent	58	530	55
4	5 mm	51	580	
5	5 mm	49	550	
6	5 mm	53	640	60
7	5 mm	48	620	
8	5 mm	68	613	65

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	9	5 mm	5	686
	10	7 mm	74	694
5	11	9 mm	86	769
	12	11 mm left	92	680
	13	16 mm left	114	860
10	14	19 mm left	286	960
	15	22 mm left	176	1214
	16	DEHISCENCE		

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Case 2 (S.A.)

Age 24 - Normal follicle-genesis - Control.

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Basal observation:

	Day of cycle	Follicle diameter	17 beta E2	17 alpha OH P
	1	5 mm	57	326
	2	5 mm	72	382
30	3	5 mm	61	358
	4	5 mm	76	287
	5	5 mm	74	269
35	6	10 mm	78	346
	7	10 mm	73	358
	8	10 mm	81	425
40	9	12 mm	95	462
	10	13 mm	103	592
	11	14 mm	112	588
45	12	16 mm	187	786
	13	18 mm	135	1242
50	14	20 mm	106	1182
	15	DEHISCENCE		

55 Cycle of observation under GRF-29 150 mcg/day i.v. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle:

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	5 mm	46	282	5
2	5 mm	43	198	
3	5 mm	48	364	
4	5 mm	62	372	10
5	5 mm	57	296	
6	5 mm	68	318	
7	7 mm	71	351	15
8	7 mm	82	370	
9	10 mm	84	432	
10	10 mm	86	445	20
11	12 mm	92	526	
12	14 mm	114	788	
13	17 mm	126	1128	25
14	20 mm	232	1246	
15	20 mm	174	1751	30
16	DEHISCENCE			

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Case 3 (C.A.)

Age 34 - Patient.

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Four years of primary infertility due to follicle-genesis and ovulatory deficiency. Previous echographic and bio-chemical studies, and inductive therapy with clomiphene citrate + ethynylestradiol and/or gonadotrophins, show the presence of a multi-follicular activation without the possibility of evolution to dominance, but with a tendency to luteinization.

The first cycle of observation showed the absence of echographic signs of activation and follicular dominance and the presence of bio-chemical signs of ovarian activation.

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Basal observation:

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	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	74	140
	2	absent	60	176
	3	absent	48	103
10	4	absent	61	118
	5	absent	42	123
	6	absent	64	146
15	7	absent	96	191
	8	absent	98	178
	9	absent	120	196
20	10	absent	137	436
	11	absent	162	764
	12	absent	139	836
25	13	absent	87	578
	14	absent	42	798
	15	absent	57	1032
30	16	absent	60	2263
	17	absent	64	2023
35	18	absent	96	876
	19	absent	71	732
	20	absent	42	876
40	21	absent	48	742
	22	absent	38	936
	23	absent	65	878
45	24	absent	72	804
	25	absent	66	972

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Menstrual flow occurred spontaneously on the 35th day of the cycle.

55 The second cycle of study, carried out under administration of GRF-29 (150 mcg/day i.v.), shows the presence of follicular activation, dominance and dehiscence. Taking into account the dimensions reached by the follicle, it may not be excluded that the disappearance of echographic observation after the 16th day of the cycle could be due to involution. Bio-chemical data testify the presence of ovulation in this cycle of observations.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	21	426	5
2	absent	24	386	
3	5 mm	78	147	
4	5 mm	42	220	10
5	7 mm	60	338	
6	7 mm	30	470	
7	7 mm	72	476	15
8	7 mm	81	512	
9	7 mm	24	338	
10	11 mm	86	780	20
11	11 mm	144	764	
12	11 mm	198	940	
13	12 mm	176	912	25
14	15 mm	166	560	
15	16 mm	144	1215	
16	18 mm	136	2131	30
17	DEHISCENCE			

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The third cycle of study was carried out under administration of FSH (Metrodin) at the dosage of 150 I.U. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. In this case echographic and bio-chemical signs of ovarian activation without follicular dominance were recorded.

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	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	42	161
	2	absent	54	191
	3	5 mm	58	176
10	4	5 mm	52	182
	5	5 mm	87	196
	6	5 mm	132	212
15	7	5 mm	102	232
	8	5 mm	112	312
	9	5 mm	114	264
20	10	5 mm	136	287
	11	5 mm	102	380
	12	5 mm	164	412
25	13	5 mm	198	397
	14	5 mm	86	514
	15	5 mm	78	498
30	16	5 mm	36	780
	17	5 mm	89	960
35	18	5 mm	86	1020
	19	5 mm	98	1120
	20	5 mm	107	1814
40	21	5 mm	54	1718
	22	5 mm	62	1920
	23	5 mm	67	1470
45	24	5 mm	65	1296
	25	5 mm	44	1540

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Menstrual flow re-occurred on the 26th day of the cycle.

55 The 4th cycle of study was carried out under administration of GRF-29 (150 mcg/day i.v.) + Metrodin^(R) (150 I.U./day i.m.) from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. During this cycle it was possible to observe ovarian activation, follicular dominance and dehiscence on the 18th day of the cycle.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	52	291	5
2	absent	58	276	
3	absent	72	364	
4	5 mm	78	386	10
5	5 mm	86	355	
6	7 mm	92	312	
7	7 mm	112	296	15
8	7 mm	136	416	
9	10 mm	128	492	
10	10 mm	182	512	20
11	12 mm	214	980	
12	14 mm	176	2050	25
13	16 mm	187	2986	
14	16 mm	86	2250	
15	18 mm	92	2322	30
16	20 mm	95	2435	
17	20 mm	106	2679	
18	DEHISCENCE			35

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Case 4 (F.L.)

Age 28 - Patient.

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Patient suffering from primary couple sterility due to follicle-genesis deficiency. Previous studies demonstrated the absence of follicular maturation. By carrying out a stimulating therapy with clomiphene citrate or gonadotrophins it was possible in the past to demonstrate the presence of follicle-genesis activation and follicle dominance, not followed, however, by ovulation.

The first cycle of observation, carried out without any therapy, shows the absence of follicular activation and dominance after 25 days of study.

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	<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	74	670
	2	absent	87	976
	3	absent	79	986
10	4	absent	83	890
	5	absent	56	760
	6	absent	78	857
15	7	absent	58	912
	8	absent	67	911
	9	absent	73	892
20	10	absent	84	695
	11	absent	103	785
	12	absent	97	775
25	13	absent	88	875
	14	absent	89	798
	15	absent	99	823
30	16	absent	112	811
	17	absent	74	820
	18	absent	86	756
35	19	absent	62	810
	20	absent	70	769
	21	absent	66	758
40	22	absent	72	814
	23	absent	81	832
45	24	absent	58	906
	25	absent	65	876

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Menstrual flow occurred spontaneously on the 38th day.
 The second cycle of study carried out under administration of GRF-29 (100 mcg/day i.v.) demonstrates the absence of ovulation but follicle-genesis was activated.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	54	689	5
2	absent	56	740	
3	absent	53	640	
4	absent	64	678	10
5	absent	51	721	
6	absent	58	707	
7	5 mm	53	814	15
8	5 mm	62	821	
9	5 mm	60	824	
10	7 mm	67	811	20
11	7 mm	72	854	
12	7 mm	69	814	
13	7 mm	87	863	25
14	10 mm	98	798	
15	10 mm	92	902	
16	10 mm	74	904	30
17	10 mm	86	870	
18	10 mm	94	986	
19	10 mm	98	965	35
20	10 mm	87	935	
21	10 mm	83	879	40
22	10 mm	81	954	
23	10 mm	78	906	
24	10 mm	90	887	45
25	10 mm	97	808	

Menstrual flow occurred spontaneously on the 33rd day.

The third cycle of the study was carried out under administration of FSH (Metrodin^(R)) in ampoules of 75 IU/day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle.

Also in this case ovarian activation was demonstrated but correct follicle-genesis and ovulation were absent.

	<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	55	760
	2	absent	47	789
	3	absent	49	754
10	4	5 mm	60	810
	5	5 mm	58	796
	6	7 mm	46	840
15	7	7 mm	65	786
	8	7 mm	90	441
	9	7 mm	87	534
20	10	7 mm	88	675
	11	7 mm	63	632
25	12	7 mm	68	652
	13	7 mm	66	678
	14	7 mm	78	691
30	15	7 mm	102	735
	16	7 mm	96	709
	17	7 mm	113	809
35	18	7 mm	95	807
	19	absent	104	812
	20	absent	86	811
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During the evening of the 20th day, menstrual flow re-occurred.

The fourth cycle of study was carried out under administration of GRF-29 100 mcg/day + Metrodin^(R) 75 IU/day via i.v. e i.m. routes respectively from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. During this period of observation it was possible to observe a maturative evolution of the follicle with ovulation between the 18th and the 19th day of the cycle.

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<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	42	327	5
2	absent	43	543	
3	5 mm	44	436	
4	5 mm	48	438	10
5	5 mm	42	395	
6	5 mm	54	540	
7	5 mm	43	365	15
8	9 mm left	126	654	
9	9 mm left	84	675	
10	12 mm left	72	643	20
11	13 mm left	96	635	
12	16 mm left	108	547	
13	16 mm left	78	673	25
14	19 mm left	99	768	
15	20 mm left	150	987	30
16	22 mm left	165	1237	
17	22 mm left	145	1570	
18	22 mm left	126	1768	35
19	DEHISCENCE			

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Case 5 (A.V.)

Age 30 - Patient.

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This patient was included in the study because of primary couple sterility due to follicle maturation deficiency, anovulation and follicular luteinization. Cycles of stimulating therapy with clomiphene citrate and gonadotrophins had been carried out without resolving the clinical situation.

The first cycle of observation, carried out without any therapy, shows the presence of a delayed ovarian activation, of anovulation and follicular luteinization.

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	<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	36	219
	2	absent	41	228
	3	absent	32	217
10	4	absent	51	307
	5	absent	45	280
	6	absent	38	275
15	7	absent	37	298
	8	5 mm	32	345
	9	5 mm	48	318
20	10	8 mm	45	321
	11	8 mm	42	315
	12	8 mm	46	324
25	13	8 mm	36	322
	14	8 mm	38	357
	15	12,1 mm right	87	432
30	16	13 mm right	125	456
	17	14,6 mm right	240	483
35	18	15,9 mm right	144	632
	19	20,3 mm right	222	608
	20	20 mm right	162	634
40	21	21 mm right	96	687
	22	30,3 mm right	109	623

45 Observations on the 22nd day of the cycle revealed the presence of irregularities in the wall of the dominant follicle, showing inner luteinization echoes. Suspension of monitoring was therefore decided. Menstrual flow re-occurred on the 35th day. An echographic study carried out during the menstrual flow demonstrated the disappearance of the follicular formation.

50 The second cycle of study was carried out under administration of FSH (Metrodin^(R)) 75 I.U./day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. It showed a substantial persistence of the situation observed during the cycle of control, except for more precocious ovarian activation.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	56	436	5
2	absent	58	412	
3	absent	45	408	
4	absent	57	367	10
5	6 mm	52	418	
6	6 mm	65	436	
7	8 mm	60	562	15
8	8 mm	68	652	
9	8 mm	78	609	
10	12 mm left	108	658	20
11	12,7 mm left	125	634	
12	14 mm left	234	676	
13	14,3 mm left	248	657	25
14	14 mm left	167	768	
15	16,5 mm left	225	789	
16	17,6 mm left	161	750	30
17	21,5 mm left	287	806	
18	26,8 mm left	308	805	35
19	26,5 mm left	237	865	
20	26,5 mm left	143	906	
21	26,3 mm left	128	987	40

Observations on the 21st day of the cycle demonstrated clear inner luteinization-like echoes of the dominant follicle. It was therefore decided to suspend the study. Menstrual flow re-occurred spontaneously on the 26th day of the cycle.

An echographic check carried out during the menstrual flow demonstrated the disappearance of the follicular formation during this cycle.

The third cycle of study was carried out under administration of 100 mcg/day i.v. of GRF-29 + 75 I.U. of FSH (Metrodin^(R))/day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. During this period it was possible to observe a better maturative evolution of the follicle with ovulation between the 16th and 17th day of the cycle.

	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	36	287
	2	absent	34	280
	3	absent	46	310
10	4	6 mm	48	298
	5	8 mm	57	346
	6	8 mm	58	320
15	7	8 mm	50	318
	8	8 mm	68	457
	9	10 mm	102	505
20	10	12 mm right	126	537
	11	14 mm right	156	518
	12	16 mm right	142	609
25	13	20 mm right	245	1027
	14	21 mm right	287	1124
	15	21 mm right	157	1245
30	16	21 mm right	134	1347
	17	DEHISCENCE		

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Menstrual flow re-occurred during the 29th day of the cycle.

40 Case 6 (C.P.)

Age 32 - Patient.

45 Eight years of primary sterility. Diagnosis of micropolycystic ovary.
Absence of follicle-genesis activation, also under gonadotrophin induction. The patient under observation had been ovariectomized on the left side.
During the first cycle of observation, without any therapy, it was possible to observe echographic, but not bio-chemical, signs of ovarian activation and absence of follicular dominance.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	36	402	5
3	absent	12	386	
4	absent	47	414	
5	absent	72	428	10
6	absent	65	472	
7	absent	49	518	
8	absent	58	464	15
9	absent	72	532	
10	5 mm	32	412	
11	5 mm	38	651	20
12	5 mm	46	646	
13	5 mm	41	807	
14	5 mm	71	687	25
15	5 mm	76	792	
16	5 mm	49	815	
17	5 mm	55	842	30
18	5 mm	47	812	
19	5 mm	49	814	35
20	absent	67	1020	
21	absent	47	819	
22	absent	76	1112	40
23	absent	59	1046	
24	absent	67	1100	
25	absent	61	976	45

Menstrual flow re-occurred spontaneously on the 37th day of the cycle. It was very scarce, and lasted for 2 days (anomalous flow).

The second cycle of observation was carried out under administration of GRF-29 150 mcg/day i.v. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle.

A good ovarian activation was observed, followed by the growth of two follicles (within a micropolycystic ovary, as stated above), which presented an involution around the 17th day of the cycle.

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	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	28	176
	2	absent	48	162
	3	absent	24	382
10	4	5 mm	66	382
	5	5 mm	78	264
	6	7 mm	64	147
15	7	7 mm	79	173
	8	9/7 mm	75	186
	9	9/8 mm	78	191
20	10	12/8 mm	112	286
	11	12/8 mm	120	367
	12	12/8 mm	136	842
25	13	12/8 mm	90	940
	14	12/8 mm	132	913
	15	12/8 mm	138	942
30	16	12 mm	142	1012
	17	INVOLUTION	112	1067

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The third cycle of observation was carried out administering Metrodin^(R) 150 I.U./day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. Ovarian activation without follicular dominance was echographically and bio-chemically demonstrated.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	26	146	5
2	absent	28	186	
3	absent	52	216	
4	absent	84	342	10
5	absent	56	287	
6	5 mm	83	298	
7	5 mm	108	188	15
8	7 mm	112	214	
9	7 mm	138	236	
10	7 mm	142	287	20
11	7 mm	126	312	
12	7 mm	116	335	
13	7 mm	126	288	25
14	7 mm	114	300	
15	7 mm	118	306	
16	7 mm	87	297	30
17	7 mm	89	480	
18	INVOLUTION			35

Menstrual flow re-occurred on the 21st day of the cycle.

The fourth observation was carried out administering GRF-29 150 mcg/day i.v. + FSH (Metrodin^(R)) 150 I.U./day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. Ovarian activation and follicular dominance were observed, with dehiscence around the 14th day of the cycle.

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	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	26	186
	2	absent	48	296
	3	absent	51	217
10	4	5 mm	76	368
	5	7 mm	72	412
	6	10 mm	94	615
15	7	10 mm	102	627
	8	12 mm	112	742
	9	15 mm	126	762
20	10	16 mm	138	713
	11	18 mm	241	816
	12	19 mm	312	1120
25	13	24 mm	106	2400
	14	DEHISCENCE		

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Case 7 (E.L.)

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Age 37 - Patient

40 Primary sterility. Absence of ovarian activation, also under administration of high dosages of gonadotrophins. The patient was in secondary amenorrhea and presented a flow only after administration of progesterone. Prior to commencement of the study, menstrual flow was induced by administering Gestone^(R) 100 mg i.m. The first cycle of observation carried out without any therapy confirmed the absence of echographic and bio-chemical notes on ovarian activation.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	21	182	5
2	absent	28	206	
3	absent	32	164	
4	absent	36	106	10
5	absent	31	118	
6	absent	30	146	
7	absent	32	172	15
8	absent	34	181	
9	absent	28	196	
10	absent	26	172	20
11	absent	21	231	
12	absent	37	356	
13	absent	27	328	25
14	absent	35	318	
15	absent	37	372	
16	absent	32	310	30
17	absent	30	336	
18	absent	27	327	
19	absent	21	311	35
20	absent	26	286	
21	absent	42	215	
22	absent	41	217	40
23	absent	38	204	
24	absent	36	236	
25	absent	51	287	45

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On the 45th day of the cycle, the flow not having re-occurred, menstruation was induced by administering Gestone^(R) 100 mg, i.m.

The second cycle of observation was carried out administering GRF-29 150 mcg/day i.v. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. The presence of echographic notes of ovarian activation, but absence of follicular dominance, was recorded.

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	<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	22	182
	2	absent	23	170
	3	absent	28	212
10	4	absent	31	186
	5	5 mm	36	214
	6	5 mm	32	182
15	7	5 mm	38	116
	8	7 mm	30	86
	9	7 mm	35	214
20	10	7 mm	41	213
	11	7 mm	32	218
	12	7 mm	46	236
25	13	7 mm	48	232
	14	7 mm	51	214
30	15	7 mm	52	182
	16	INVOLUTION		

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Menstrual flow was induced by administering Gestone^(R) 100 mg i.m. on the 45th day of the cycle.
 The third cycle of observation was carried out under administration of FSH (Metrodin^(R)), 150 U.I./day i.m.
 from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. It was possible to observe echographic, but not bio-chemical, signs of
 ovarian activation and the absence of follicular dominance.

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<u>Day of cycle</u>	<u>Follicle diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>	
1	absent	36	112	5
2	absent	38	110	
3	absent	46	114	
4	5 mm	42	162	10
5	10 mm	44	176	
6	10 mm	48	182	
7	10 mm	56	196	15
8	10 mm	58	182	
9	10 mm	64	187	
10	10 mm	68	172	20
11	10 mm	52	198	
12	10 mm	56	176	
13	10 mm	58	187	25
14	10 mm	55	195	
15	10 mm	46	164	
16	10 mm	58	156	30
17	10 mm	64	187	
18	10 mm	72	209	
19	10 mm	38	212	35
20	10 mm	36	214	
21	10 mm	28	207	
22	10 mm	32	286	40
23	10 mm	41	211	
24	10 mm	32	189	
25	10 mm	46	214	45

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Menstrual flow was induced by Gestone^(R) 100 mg on the 45th day of the cycle.

The fourth cycle of observation was carried out under administration of GRF-29 150 mcg/day i.v. + Metrodin^(R) 150 I.U./day i.m. from the 1st to the 7th day of the cycle. It was possible to demonstrate the presence of echographic and bio-chemical signs of follicular activation, dominance and dehiscence.

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	<u>Day of</u> <u>cycle</u>	<u>Follicle</u> <u>diameter</u>	<u>17 beta E2</u>	<u>17 alpha OH P</u>
5	1	absent	31	386
	2	absent	38	394
	3	absent	24	470
10	4	5 mm	34	570
	5	7 mm	76	640
	6	7 mm	132	720
15	7	7 mm	139	550
	8	10 mm	104	420
	9	10 mm	114	436
20	10	10 mm	188	482
	11	13 mm	186	560
	12	14 mm	282	630
25	13	16 mm	308	985
	14	20 mm	304	1760
30	15	22 mm	346	3280
	16	DEHISCENCE		

These results demonstrate that administration of GRF-29 during the first phase of the cycle facilitates follicle growth and anticipates, or even induces, ovulation (dehiscence). Furthermore, GRF was capable of coadjuvating, always at follicular level, the effect of FSH in patients with documented anovulation. In these latter cases, treatment with GRF in combination with FSH always caused efficacious follicle growth up until ovulation.

Treatment of male infertility

Patients suffering spermatogenesis deficiencies of various entity with oligospermia or azoospermia, selected according to the criteria of the protocol, were treated for a period of three months with GRF-29 at the dosage of 5 mcg/kg s.c. 3 times a week.

In conformity with the criteria of inclusion in the protocol, all the patients ranged between 25 and 40 years, with normal or above average gonadotrophin levels, and did not present inflammatory processes or other diseases which could have interfered with the seminal parameters. Testicular biopsy showed an arrest of spermatogenesis at spermatid level in the absence of peritubular fibrosis.

The first control was carried out after 45 days from commencement of therapy, and the second control after 3 months. The tests showed an improvement of the seminal parameters, and especially an increase in the number of spermatozoa and their motility, from which the efficacy of the therapy can be deduced.

The above described treatment was carried out by using GRF alone, in consideration of the normal or above average gonadotrophin levels, based on the criteria of inclusion in the protocol. It falls within the scope of the present invention to use GRF to amplify the effect of gonadotrophins in all cases of spermatogenesis deficiency, due to either testicular pathologies or gonadotrophic secretion deficiency (hypogonadotropic hypogonadism).

Although the clinical studies reported above were carried out by using FSH as gonadotrophin, it is evident that similar results can be obtained by administering Menotrophin (HMG) or any other preparation containing FSH.

Similarly, the use of GRF-44, or other molecules having analogous activity, in place of the GRF-29 which was used in the above reported clinical studies, can be considered as equivalent.

Claims

- 1) Use of a Somatotrophin releasing-factor to produce a pharmaceutical preparation for the treatment of infertility. 5
- 2) Use according to claim 1 wherein the pharmaceutical preparation for the treatment of infertility includes a pharmacologically efficacious quantity of a Somatotrophin releasing-factor and one or more excipients. 10
- 3) Use according to Claims 1 and 2 in which the Somatotrophin releasing-factor is selected from any of GRF-29, GRF-37, GRF-40, GRF-44, GRF-NH₂-44 or mixtures thereof.
- 4) Use according to claims 1 to 3 in which the pharmaceutical preparation is used simultaneously, sequentially or separately with a pharmacologically efficacious quantity of follicle stimulating hormone. 15
- 5) Use according to claim 4 wherein the follicle-stimulating hormone is in the form of a pharmaceutical preparation.
- 6) Product containing a somatotrophin releasing-factor and follicle stimulating hormone for use as a medicament.
- 7) Product according to claim 6 for use in the treatment of infertility. 20
- 8) Product according to claim 6 and 7 obtainable by simultaneous, separate or sequential use of somatotrophin releasing-factor and follicle stimulating hormone.
- 9) Product according to claims 6 to 8 in which the Somatotrophin releasing-factor is selected from any of GRF-29, GRF-37, GRF-40, GRF-44, GRF-NH₂-44 or mixtures thereof.
- 10) Product according to claims 6 to 9 in which the follicle stimulating hormone is in the form of Menotrophin, Urofollitrophin or mixtures thereof. 25
- 11) Pharmaceutical composition containing a Somatotrophin releasing-factor and follicle-stimulating hormone, in the presence of one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients, for the simultaneous, separate or sequential use of its active components in the treatment of infertility.
- 12) Pharmaceutical composition according to Claim 11 containing a somatotrophin releasing-factor selected from any of GRF-29, GRF-37, GRF-40, GRF-44, GRF-NH₂-44 or mixtures thereof and follicle-stimulating hormone in the presence of one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients. 30
- 13) Pharmaceutical composition according to Claims 11 and 12 wherein the follicle-stimulating hormone is selected from either Menotrophin or Urofollitrophin or mixtures thereof.
- 14) Pharmaceutical composition according to claims 11 and 13 in which the Somatotrophin releasing-factor is GRF-29. 35
- 15) Pharmaceutical composition according to claims 11 to 14 obtainable by simultaneous, separate or sequential use of a pharmacologically efficacious quantity of somatotrophin releasing-factor with a pharmacologically efficacious quantity of follicle stimulating hormone.
- 16) Pharmaceutical composition according to claim 15 wherein the somatotrophin releasing-factor is in the form of a pharmaceutical preparation as defined in claims 1 to 3. 40
- 17) Pharmaceutical composition according to claims 15 and 16 wherein the follicle stimulating hormone is in the form of a pharmaceutical preparation.
- 18) Pharmaceutical composition according to claim 17 wherein the follicle-stimulating hormone is selected from either Menotrophin or Urofollitrophin or mixtures thereof. 45

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54 Treatment of infertility.

57 The use of somatotrophin releasing factor (GRF) is disclosed for the treatment of infertility. Also disclosed for such treatment is the use of somatotrophin releasing factor along with gonadotrophins, particularly follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) or preparations containing FSH. Pharmaceutical preparations containing somatotrophin releasing factor, including preparations containing both somatotrophin releasing factor and follicle stimulating hormone, are also disclosed.

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
A	BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS, vol. 84, no. 12, 1987, abstract no. 117704, Biological Abstracts, Inc., Philadelphia, PA, US; R.C. GAILLARD: "The hypothalamic factors: Recent diagnostic and therapeutic advances", & SCHWEIZ MED WOCHENSCHR 117(34): 1270-1277. 1987 ---		A 61 K 37/43
A	PROC. NATL. ACAD. SCI. USA, vol. 79, December 1982, pages 7909-7913, US; P. BRAZEAU et al.: "Growth hormone releasing factor, somatocrinin, releases pituitary growth hormone in vitro" -----		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.4)
			A 61 K
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12-10-1989	Examiner TURMO Y BLANCO C.E.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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